to the guidelines issued by his Ministry for use of diplomatic passports strictly for official purposes and allow its use during their foreign postings;

(b) if so, the number of cases where diplomatic passports have been misused during last one year; and

(c) what punitive action has been initiated against the concerned officers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Questions do not arise.

Visit of a emissary from Moscow

1684. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a emissary from Moscow visited New Delhi, recently, and

(b) if so, the decisions taken at the meet?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) and (b) First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr. V.I. Trubnikov visited India on 17-18 July, 2002 for the 5th Session of the Indo-Russian Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan. Foreign Secretary Mr. Kanwal Sibal and Mr. Trubnikov led the Indian and Russian delegations respectively for the JWG on Afghanistan. During this visit, Mr. Trubnikov also called on Deputy Prime Minister Mr. L.K. Advani, Minister of External Affairs Mr. Yashwant Sinha and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and National Security Adviser Mr. Brajesh Mishra.

The Joint Statement issued at the end of the visit is enclosed.

Statement

Joint Statement issued on the occasion of 5th Session of India-Russia Joint Working Group on Afghanistan—17-18 July 2002

The fifth meeting of the India-Russia Joint Working Group on Afghanistan was held in New Delhi on 17-18 July, 2002. Foreign Secretary

Kanwal Sibal led the Indian delegation to the meeting. H.E. Mr. Vyacheslav I. Trubnikov, First Deputy Foreign Minister led the Russian delegation.

They noted positively the developments in Afghanistan, the implementation of the Bonn Agreements, and convening of the Loya Jirga in June. They looked forward to the consolidation of political, security and reconstruction processes in Afghanistan so that peace and stability could be restored on a durable basis and roots of terrorism eradicated.

They reiterated their determination to continue supporting the reconstruction effort and the political consolidation process.

Concern was expressed at continuing activity of Taliban and Al-Qaida elements and recent killing of Afghan Vice President Haji Abdul Qadeer by the forces of instability and intolerance. They agreed that the regrouping of Al-Qaida and Taliban cadres in Afghanistan, and on its southern and south-eastern borders, presents a serious threat to Afghanistan and to regional peace and stability.

The two sides welcomed and supported the key continuing co-ordinating role of the United Nations in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan, noted the UN contribution to mobilising international humanitarian aid and establishing the new administrative institutions in Afghanistan.

In view of the need to further strengthen the universal international legal basis for combating terrorism a detailed exchange of views took place on the ways to expedite the conclusion of the work in the UN on the Indian draft Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism and the Russian draft International Convention for the suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The sides agreed to continue coordinating their efforts aimed at achieving this goal.

The two sides reiterated that terrorism cannot be justified on any grounds and must be eradicated wherever it exists. They recalled that UN Security Council Resolution 1373 reaffirmed the principle that every State has the duty to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in another State or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such

acts, and further mandated that all States must refrain from providing any form of support, active or passive, to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts.

They stressed the need for Pakistan to fulfil its stated commitment to end cross-border terrorism and extremism, not allow infiltration through the line of control and to fulfil its obligation asumed for suppressing the activities of terrorist groups based in Pakistan controlled territories.

The two sides also discussed the situation in Central Asia, Transcaucusus, and issues relating to emerging threats to regional and international peace and stability.

The delegations stressed that the interaction of Russia and India in combating international terrorism constituted an important component of strategic partnership between the two countries. The Sides confirmed their firm intention to further strengthen their anti terrorism cooperation based on summit-level agreements.

The two sides agreed that the next meeting of the Joint Working Group would be held in Moscow on mutually convenient dates.

New Delhi

18th July, 2002

US visa regulations

1685. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether US has assured India that they need not worry about US visa regulations;

(b) if so, to what extent the new visa regulations by the US immigration and Naturalisation Service has affected India; and

(c) to what extent India is satisfied?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Questions do not arise.